Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program

NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program

Science Plan Webinar

November 2014

Outline

- Webinar Presentation
  - Science program overview
  - What does the science plan cover?
  - How was the science plan developed?
  - Long-term research priorities
  - Commenting on the plan
  - Current and future activities
- Open question and answer
- Questions (5) for participants

NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program

- Section 1604 of the RESTORE Act authorizes NOAA to establish a science program "*…to carry out research, observation, and monitoring to support, to the maximum extent practicable, the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, fish stocks, fish habitat, and the recreational, commercial, and charter fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico.*"
  - NOAA must coordinate with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and consult with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
  - Priority shall be given to integrated, long-term projects that address management needs
- NOAA is actively engaging with stakeholders whose science needs are the driving force in the development and execution of the program
- NOAA is coordinating with other Deepwater Horizon oil spill-related science and restoration programs

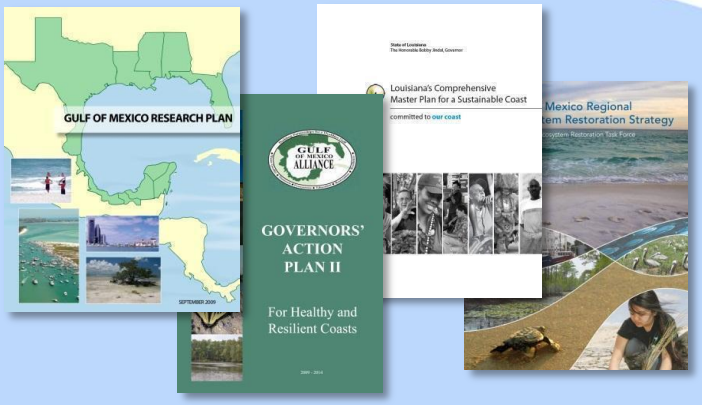
Science Plan: What it Covers

- The science plan lays out the path forward for the Program.
- The plan establishes ten long-term research priorities which will guide how the program will invest its funds and explains the process by which these areas of investment were determined.
- Additionally, the plan provides information on how the program will be administered and how the program will work with its partners.

Program overview and priorities
- Legislative requirements
- Vision and mission
- Geographic scope
- Approach to engagement
- Rationale and process for establishing priorities
- Ten long-term priorities

Program structure and administration
- Program management
- Approach to coordination
- Program parameters
- Eligibility for funding opportunities
- Scientific integrity
- Data and information sharing

Priority Identification Process



- Reviewed existing documents and earlier stakeholder input to identify research needs
- Consolidated priorities
- Identified management needs supported by each consolidated priority
- Identified key activities and anticipated outputs and outcomes

Long-term Research Priorities

- Increase comprehensive understanding of Gulf ecosystem services, resilience and vulnerabilities of coupled social and ecological systems.
- Construct management-ready and accessible ecosystem models for the Gulf of Mexico.
- Improve forecasting, analysis and modeling of climate change and weather effects on the sustainability and resiliency of Gulf ecosystems.
- Increase comprehensive understanding of watershed, sediment, and nutrient flows and impacts on coastal ecology and habitats.
- Increase comprehensive understanding of coastal and living marine resources, food web dynamics, habitat utilization, protected area, and carbon flow.

Long-term Research Priorities

- Analyze new and existing social and environmental data to develop long-term trend and variability information on the status and health of ecosystems, including humans.
- Develop, identify, and validate system-wide indicators of Gulf Coast environmental and socioeconomic conditions.
- Obtain information and develop decision support tools needed to monitor and adaptively manage habitat, living marine resources, and wildlife.
- Network and integrate existing and planned data/information from Gulf monitoring programs.
- Develop and implement advanced engineering, physical, chemical, biological, and socioeconomic technologies to improve monitoring.

Comment on the Plan

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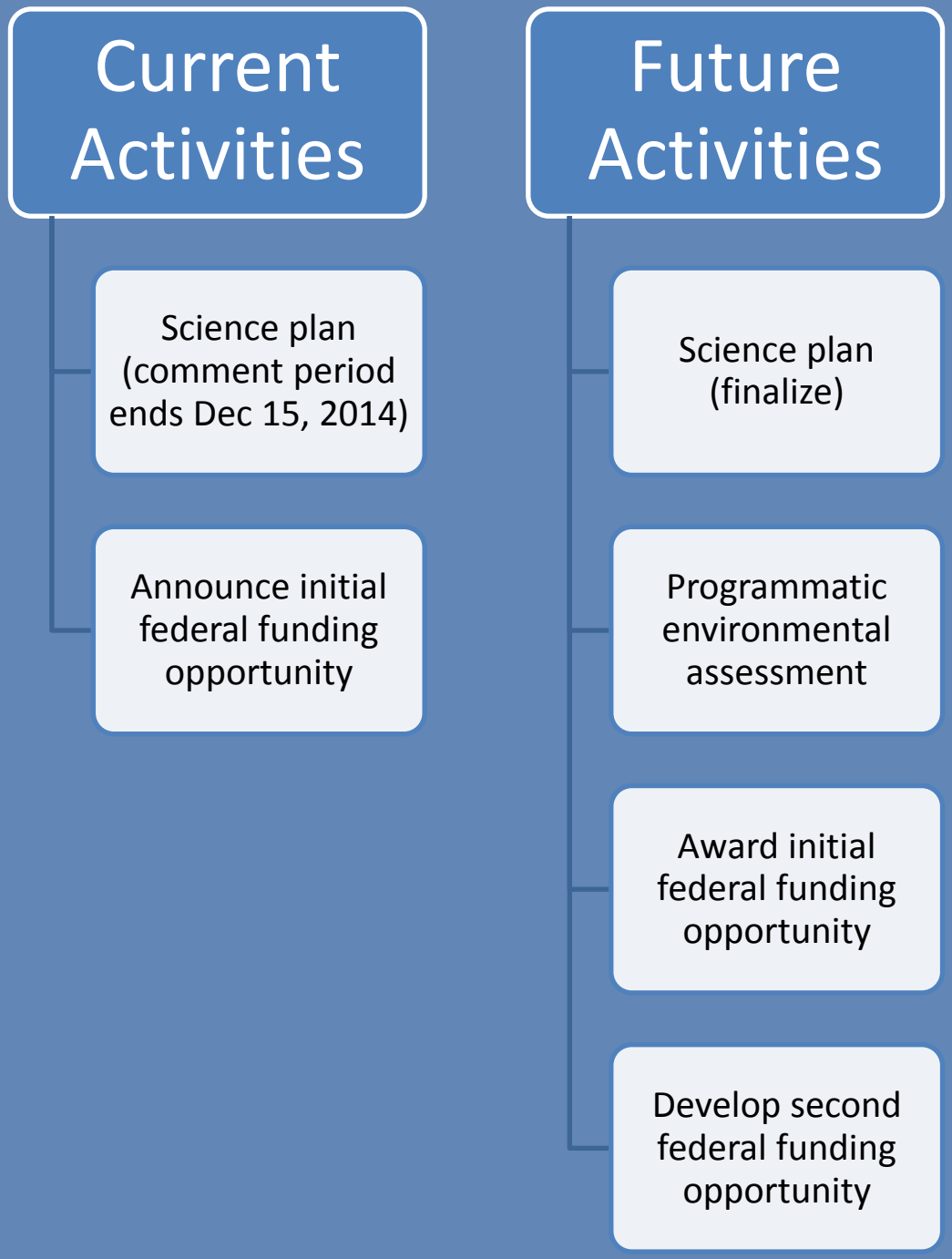
Current Activities
Science plan (comment period ends Dec 15, 2014)
Announce initial federal funding opportunity
Future Activities
Science plan (finalize)
Programmatic environmental assessment
Award initial federal funding opportunity
Develop second federal funding opportunity

Participant Questions

Question 1: Is there anything major missing from the draft science plan? (250 character answer limit)

Question 2: The identified long-term research priorities list several example activities under each priority. Are there other example activities you would like to bring to our attention? (250 character answer limit)

Question 3: What long-term research priority do you think needs to be addressed immediately?

Question 4: Did you find this session useful?
A. Very useful B. Useful C. Somewhat useful D. Not useful

Question 5: How would you suggest we improve these sessions in the future? (250 character answer limit)